

Deschutes River, Capitol Lake, and Budd Inlet TMDL Advisory Group Meeting

Thursday, August 19, 2010 -- 9:00 a.m. to 11:50 a.m.
Tumwater Fire Department, 311 Israel Rd. SW

Attendees

Agriculture, WA State Dept. of

- Ann Wick

Black Hills Audubon Society

- Sue Danver

Ecology, WA State Dept. of

- Betsy Dickes
- Chuck Hoffman
- Kim McKee
- Lydia Wagner

Fish & Wildlife, WA State Dept. of

- Hal Michael

LOTT Alliance

- Laurie Pierce

Olympia, City of

- Joe Roush

Olympia Yacht Club

- Jim Lengenfelder

South Sound GREEN

- Anne Mills

Squaxin Island Tribe

- John Konovsky
- **Thurston County**
- Pat Allen
- Sue Davis
- Owen Reynolds
- Barb Wood

Tumwater, City of

- Dan Smith

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- Dave Ragsdale

Watershed Characterization Study

Guests: Barb Wood, Department of Water and Waste Management, and Owen Reynolds, Thurston Geodata Center.

They presented information about work they are doing through an EPA West Coast Estuaries Initiative Grant. The grant title is *“Protecting Puget Sound Watersheds Water Quality and Aquatic Resources from the Impacts of Growth”*. More information is available online at <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/stormwater/chara/chara-home.html>.

The priority watersheds for this study include Totten and Eld Inlets, Deschutes River, and Nisqually River. A pilot characterization study was done for Henderson Inlet. The county applied lessons learned from the Henderson Inlet study to the watersheds in this new grant.

Key items addressed in their presentation:

- Goals of Watershed Characterization
- Stormwater Program Policy Goals
- Science of Ecosystem Analysis
- Methodology
- Drainage Analysis Unit (DAU)
- Imagery
- Landscape Indicators
- Preliminary Results in Deschutes
- Policy Impacts

The Deschutes River watershed boundary shown in this study is different than what is typically used. The county used LIDAR and high water marks or forced edges near main roadways to determine the boundary. Land cover shown generally indicates built environments such as the City of Olympia and Tumwater. Bare spots in the upper watershed indicate clear-cut areas.

The DAUs are highlighted using the traffic light approach of red, yellow, green. **Red** indicates there are 20% or more impervious areas and the system is *not properly functioning*. **Yellow** indicates the area is *at risk*. **Green** indicates the system is *properly functioning*. The middle Deschutes watershed has high possibility for development. The study helps to identify critical (red) and marginal (yellow) areas.

A recurring theme in the presentation was the goal to restore, rehabilitate, and preserve the watersheds. They reminded us these are important issues to the work identified and targeted by the Puget Sound Partnership.

For more information contact:

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(Their presentation is available online at
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/advcomm/081910DeschutesAdvMtgWatershedCharacterizationStudy.pdf>.)

Deschutes Reverse Auction Grant Idea

The Watershed Characterization Study talked about in the first presentation was the lead in to this next agenda item. Lydia Wagner talked about a grant idea in development by a subgroup of this committee. The proposal is to develop an innovative reverse auction pilot program to restore, rehabilitate, and preserve a Puget Sound (Deschutes) Watershed. We see this as an incentive-based approach to watershed restoration. It would provide financial support to property owners to implement best management practices resulting in the rehabilitation, restoration, and enhancement of riparian cover. The work correlates well with the work this advisory group is doing in developing a water cleanup plan and implementation strategy. This grant idea already has support from Thurston County, Thurston Conservation District, City of Tumwater, and Ecology's Environmental Assessment and Water Quality Programs. We expect the next EPA grant cycle to open in mid-September and close by the end of October.

More information about the **Puget Sound Anticipated Request for Proposals (RFPs) for Lead Organizations** is available on EPA's website at http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/ECOCOMM.NSF/Puget+Sound/ant_rfp_2010.

Middle Watershed Issues – General Discussion

Thurston County Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO): What impacts will these have on the TMDL? If the TMDL establishes limits, will affect additional changes to future ordinances?

Updated information about the CAO is available online at http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/critical_areas/criticalareas-draft-2010.htm. This includes the first four chapters of the proposed CAO including the General Purposes, Definitions, General Provisions, and Administrative chapters. The Thurston County Planning Commission received these chapters on July 7, 2010 and they should have received the remaining chapters on August 4.

Agriculture: There are agricultural issues concentrated in the middle watershed. The CAOs will not address these at all. We need to identify the agricultural impacts to the watershed. What work has the Thurston Conservation District (TCD) done? Where is work still needed?

The TCD has the **Deschutes TMDL Grant Brochure** available online at <http://www.thurstoncd.com/files/Deschutes%20TMDL%20Grant%20Brochure.pdf>.

Note: Lydia has contacted the TCD and has asked them to come and speak about the grant work done. Of particular interest is the work related to agricultural issues.

How does the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) factor into agricultural issues? Information is available online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

Information about applicable licenses, permits, and certifications, including dairies, is available on the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) website at: <http://agr.wa.gov/Portals/LicPermCert/>.

Reminder: We need to go back and look at the draft Deschutes Technical Study for agricultural impacts as well as shade and temperature issues. It identifies where the impacts are and makes recommendations on how to achieve reductions.

Public perception: We acknowledge there are challenges to property owners accepting help from the Thurston Conservation District (TCD). They see the TCD as an extension of state government. Recently Adam Sant, TCD, successfully funded a project with a local landowner who has a big equestrian center. This is a major accomplishment. There is another significant property near the Smith Farm that has a long reach over the river and needs shade. Perhaps Adam's success with the other landowner will help with this other property.

Water withdrawals and exempt wells: We discussed again the issue of water rights, particularly regarding groundwater permit exempt wells and the previous WRIA Planning effort.

Concerns:

- Why doesn't the Water Quality Program address in-stream flows in a TMDL?
- Does the Clean Water Act have an element to directly deal with this issue?
- This group has the goal of improving the overall health of the watershed yet we're putting our heads in the sand by not addressing flows.

Responses: TMDLs do reference low flow conditions and impacts of water use when appropriate. Flow issues were part of the watershed planning effort (1999 – 2004) to focus on water quantity with some aspects of water quality. Not all initiatives covered water quality. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits focus on limiting or eliminating pollutants to waterbodies. Examples of pollutants include sediments, pH, bacteria, and relationships to dissolved oxygen and temperature. Ecology is not able to address flow issues within the TMDL process. We can only deal with discharges and additions to the water systems that could result in them not meeting state water quality standards. Pollution is **not** the same as a pollutant. Ecology acknowledges flow issues are important and refers those concerned to the Water Resources Program for specific information about in-stream flows and Thurston County about the WRIA 13 Planning efforts. The TMDL will address these issues where appropriate and applicable.

Detailed information about the Ground Water Permit Exemption is available online at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/comp_enforce/gwpe.html. The main items the site includes are:

- Use of permit exempt wells
- Restrictions on permit exempt wells
- Attorney General Opinions regarding the groundwater exemption
- Case law regarding groundwater exemption
- Instream flow rulemaking – ground water component

More information about the WRIA 13 Watershed Management Project is available on Thurston County's Water Resources Program website at <http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/stormwater/basin/basin-wria13.html> .



The Department of Ecology has added a new feature to engage the public in a discussion around the protection and management of water resources. The **Water Smart Washington Online Forum** is available online at: <http://ecologywa.wordpress.com/2010/08/27/watersmartwashington/>.

Integrated Ambient Monitoring Approach for Urban Streams: Barb Wood talked about a trout embryo study done at Indian Creek under their current EPA grant. This work is to help identify what impacts fish survival. This could include, for example, the effects of endocrine disruptors. They are very curious about the sub lethal effects of various components and want to develop a multi-tiered monitoring process. It will demonstrate a method for assessing the suitability of streams for supporting salmon early life stages and the food they need to survive and grow. The Ambient Monitoring Pilot Description is available online at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/tmdl/deschutes/advisorycomm/081910AmbientMonitoringPilotDescription.pdf>.

Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in Municipal Wastewater: Related to the previous topic, we discussed a screening study done in 2008 addressing pharmaceuticals and personal care products in municipal wastewater. LOTT was one of five wastewater treatment plants that participated in the study. The report developed by Ecology, EPA and the Puget Sound Partnership, "*Control of Toxic Chemicals in Puget Sound, Phase 3: Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in Municipal Wastewater and Their Removal by Nutrient Treatment Technologies,*" is available online at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/1003004.html> .

Open Comment

No public comment given.

Next meeting

It is on Thursday, September 30, from 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon, at the Tumwater Fire Department, 311 Israel Rd. SW.

Key agenda item: Issues related to septic systems including nitrate impacts.